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ABSTRACT

Reforming university programs in educational administration should combine theoretical knowledge with practical application. Any changes must be spearheaded by such professional organizations as the NCPEA (National Council of Professors of Educational Administration) and the UCEA (University Council for Educational Administration). Texas A and M University offers a model program that reflects such a change. Reforms include improving the student selection process, offering more and richer clinical experiences, relating the sequence of courses to the actual administrative function, and broadening students' professional and political contacts and consciousness. (JAM)

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THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

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The Future of Educational Administration: Knowledge and Faith

Over 200 years ago, the German poet and philosopher, Freidrich Von Schiller must have received a vision of educational administration in 1990 when he wrote:

> The busy day works far way in confused noises and through the meaningless din of voices I discern the blows of heavy hammers.

Though Schiller was expressing his hatred for the tyranny of his day, his words are striking to us today.

It is a confusing yet exciting time to be a professor of educational administration. Much has happened in our discipline in 1989 (i.e., the release of the National Policy Board report Improving the Preparation of School Administrators: An Agenda for Reform [1] followed by the convocation of 100 to discuss the report; and the fact that we have needless division in our own ranks. This division between faculty of the larger doctoral granting UCEA institutions and faculty of the smaller institutions that grant the Master's degree and/or licensure has grown in recent years. The recommendations in Leaders for America's Schools [2] published by UCEA which called for closing 300 smaller preparation programs did nothing to bring unity in the ranks. In 1987 UCEA decided to initiate an annual conference which was seen by some professors as a move to compete with or eliminate the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration Conference (NCPEA). Thus far the leadership of both UCEA and NCPEA have evidenced little interest in combining the two conventions which could enhance the profession and promote unity.

The Yellow Brick Road

As a result of these stormy developments, it is time to take one more look at the road ahead. If only the road were yellow brick and if university programs in educational administration could ever agree to be "off to see the wizard" and to know when we have found him/her! Would we need NCPEA or UCEA any longer? Where would we be without wicked witches, munchkins, and tornados in educational administration? It is time to gather all of the brains, heart, and courage we have and to control the turbulence in our minds and to bring our house safely out of the Land of Oz to face the realities ahead. While the troubled road ahead always looks better under the light of day and among our supportive colleagues, only the Alfred E. Newmans in our discipline are saying, "Who, me worry?" I think it is time to worry. We do "discern the blows of heavy hammers" on up the yellow brick road.

The Wall of Negativism in Educational Administration

We who have been around a while in the professorship have experienced the winds of change in our field. Bruce Cooper and William Boyd [3] led us through an extensive evolution of training for school administrators since 1865. They reminded us of the progress made, the glaring inadequacies found, and the need to look for higher quality alternatives in our field for the future.

Many entered the professorship during the time that Cooper and Boyd [3] called the age of the "One Best Model." This "One Best Model" stressed training in the behavioral sciences, with courses in management, leadership theory, organization theory, law, finance, public relations, program planning and evaluation, the

principalship and superintendency. Many of these courses were required for state certification. This "One Best Model" has served education well. "It served the needs of burgeoning local districts that needed administrators trained quickly and with minimal disruption (most were able to continue working while going to graduate school)" [3, p. 22]. Doctoral programs merely blended the required certification courses with "advanced" courses, research hours, a residency and a dissertation to prepare leaders for our schools and the professorship. Professors thought that the world of educational administration (with a few glitches) would come out all right. This naive feeling of accomplishment was soon dampened by a wall of negativism driven by the reform movement. The first reform reports were directed at improving schools, schooling and teacher preparation. Then the inevitable happened with the calls for improving the inadequate training of administrators in Time for Results [4], Leaders for America's Schools [2], and School Leadership Preparation: A Preface for Action [5]. Although AASA [6], NASSP [7] and NAESP [8] had developed guidelines and proposals for preparing school leaders and numerous papers were presented at NCPEA and AERA on improvement agendas for administrator preparation, education commissions were formed, reports were written and released usually ignoring or not aware of ongoing change efforts to improve preparation. For the most part professors of educational administration were left out of the reform report developments. These reports have prompted most states to establish reform legislation, advisory committees and task forces on school

management. Certification exams, alternative certification, administrator evaluation systems, and school based training have been intensified. It is striking how all of this activity was generated to reform administrator training with little if any empirical research or systematic evaluation to measure the state-of-the-art in administrator effectiveness. There exist many anecdotal accounts of insensitive, bumbling administrators who were poorly trained as instructional leaders or team builders. The recurring statement from administrator reform groups was "effective schools have effective, visionary leaders." Few political or educational reformers took the time and effort to determine what effective visionary school leaders really do, let alone how well they do it.

These kinds of changes prompted in part by outside groups bring out the worst or the best in professors who spend our lives in the serious study of educational administration. After recovering from some of the dissonance and outrage created when professional expertise was trampled on, professors eventually began to reflect on the positive elements of reform. Professors have seen the positive developments in the reform maelstrom with some new and better ways to think about their roles in improving school leadership. It is significant that most professors and practicing school administrators now support professional growth plans to keep school leaders up to date. Universities, state administrator groups, and state departments are coming together to improve the skill development of school administrators. A prime facilitator for this coalition for management development has been

the federally funded Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) projects [9].

LEAD and other reform groups and their reports have accomplished three major tasks to improve the practice of school administration (1) they focused on the pitifully meager resources made available for administrator preparation, faculty and student recruitment, and research agendas, and (2) they pointed to the greatly increased number of university/public school collaboratives for research and field based experiences for school administrator preparation. The third development (3) is the willingness of corporations (i.e., Dupont and IBM among others) to share their leadership and management training programs with school administrators. The Dupont Corporation's five day leadership training program has become one of the staff development options created by the LEAD project for Texas school administrators. These corporate training programs provide another look and perhaps new insights that can be incorporated into preparation programs.

Most of the other problems in administrator preparation listed in Leaders [2] have been themes or major issues for NCPEA conferences for at least 42 years (i.e., lack of definition of good educational leadership, the lack of women and minorities in the field, the lack of preparation programs relevant to the job of administrators, the lack of course sequence, modern content and clinical experiences in preparation program). Walter Cocking, Julian Butterworth and others had most of these concerns in mind when they led the charge to form NCPEA and put some intellectual

and useful "zap" into our preparation programs. "The objectives of the first NCPEA conference in Endicott, New York, in 1947 were to achieve among conference members a better understanding of the problems of developing leaders in education and to bring about a common approach regarding the methods and techniques for the more effective preparation of educational administrators" [10]. These early efforts to improve our profession have produced marked changes in graduate programs, but the variance in the quality remains. Because some of our programs are just not very good, reform has touched us all.

The following truth-sprinkled statement from the 1989 reform report of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration sums up the spirit of several recent state and national reports on the state of the art in administrator preparation.

> Over the past quarter century pre-service preparation programs for educational administration have proliferated, but their quality has deteriorated. In a variety of ways, these programs are failing their candidates; ultimately, they are failing our nation's schoolchildren. They have strayed far from the classical model of intensive, disciplined study under the tutelage of scholars and practitioners. Instead they enroll large numbers of almost entirely part-time students who accrue credits on a piecemeal basis toward inadequate standards of licensure. The model that the field accepts for certification and licensure is recognizable more by its weaknesses than by its strengths, weaknesses so pervasive they are treated as inevitable characteristics of the field [1, p. 9]

It is true that preparation programs have proliferated and that some have deteriorated. Part-time students who accumulate credits over a period of several years are being shortchanged in their career development. Most educational administration programs are underfunded and department faculty admit far too many students into certification and doctoral programs perhaps to

protect the professors' job security. In spite of these weaknesses there is little empirical evidence that the preparation model "that the field accepts for certification and licensure is recognizable more by its weaknesses than by its strengths..." [1, p. 9].

The truth is that all certification and degree programs could stand improvement. Much is wrong and troubling in the discipline, but much is also right. Bright, positive, young men and women are selecting and being recruited into the field. Graduate students in educational administration are intelligent and eager to learn their discipline and craft. Departments of educational administration tend to create a feeling of acceptance and caring that graduate faculty in other departments tend to ignore. Educational adminstration faculty tend to be optimists who tend to believe that students can excel as school leaders. This optimism and high expectation often turns an average student into one of high achievement. While greater care must be taken to select bright people with the potential to lead in stressful leadership positions, we must be very cautious about using inadequate screening tools to sift out those who wish to enter our programs. Moreover, the students selected to enter the field should have the desire to lead. According to Attila the Hun, "Weak is the chieftain who does not want to be one" [11].

Practicing Administrators View Their Preparation

Practicing administrators themselves are not overly critical of their preparation programs. A 1988 study by the National Center for Educational Information reported that one in four

superintendents and principals said that their preparation was "excellent," one half of the respondents said their program were "pretty good," and only one percent of the superintendents and two percent of the principals described their preparation as poor [12]. Earlier Cunningham and Hentges [13] also found that superintendents have positive feelings about their university preparation in educational administration. They cited positive and personal relationships with their major professors as one source of these good feelings. However, these school leaders were critical of some of the course content and cited inadequate clinical or field experience.

A Professor's Critical View of Preparation

Many professors waiver between cynicism and wild optimism about our future in educational administration . Charles Achilles [14] is such a person. His talents and mood swings about our profession are displayed in his ebullient and scholarly piece titled, "Unlocking Some Mysteries of Administration and Administrator Preparation: A Reflective Prospect." Achilles reveals his cynical side by claiming that, "...current research suggests that student outcomes seem related to administrator behaviors that are not commonly identified through observational studies in schools or taught in preparation programs." He adds that, "Future administrators tend to self select into preparation programs; there is little attempt to recruit selectively or to screen vigorously for the programs...and higher education contributes mightily to the problem by reserving its fiscal support for a few students...who wish to teach or study about

administration rather than to practice administration" [14, p.44]. Achilles then switches to his position of optimism by opining that, "In spite of these and many other criticisms of administration and preparation programs, there are rays of hope" [14, p. 45]. He proceeds to offer fertile suggestions for improvement to major groups who have a stake in the process: higher education, state education agencies, school systems, associations, federal government, and education in general. Several of these suggestions have been helpful in the new cohort professional studies doctorate underway at Texas A&M University, described later on. Achilles then closes his chapter by asserting, "I'm convinced that now is the time for new viewpoints, new models and new structures in educational administration" [14, 62].

Critics and supporters of the art and science of educational administration and the training components all agree on one thing--educational administration needs a stronger knowledge base and better delivery models for preparing a new breed of school executives. What are the components and structure of our knowledge base that is embraced as sacred to the discipline and what do we do to transfer the act of knowing to the art of doing?

Our Knowledge Base

In 1781 Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher in his Critique of Pure Reason, distinguished sharply between the things of our experience (phenomena) and things-in-themselves (noumena), which the intellect cannot actually fathom--yet though we cannot know the noumenal realm, we can know that it exists. Ethics and

aesthetics are grounded in it. Perhaps this demarcation is the reason that students of educational administration engage in such endless debate about the knowledge base of our discipline/profession. Peterson and Finn [15] strengthen this assumption by saying it this way, "The issue is not, however, whether this list or that list is superior. It is rather that no set of competencies, experience, and knowledge is commonly accepted as the core of any well designed program of graduate study for future school administrators..." [15, p. 101]. They did mention, however, that "One commendable version was offered by the American Association of School Administrators [6], spanning seven major areas of knowledge and skills: school climate and how to construct it, instructional management systems and how to run them, staff members and how to evaluate them, school resources and how to allocate them, educational research and how to utilize it." Despite this exception, the "blows of heavy hammers" are heard when they say "without a solid base in theory, in research, in knowledge, and in the application of analytical thinking to concrete management problems, the university has little to offer the prospective school administrator" [15, p. 104].

It is true that the "noumena" which the intellect cannot actually handle messes with the things of our experience. Do we really know that the courses in theory, planning, principalship, decision theory, law, finance, curriculum, instruction and research prepare people to lead schools in ethical and positive ways? The professorship is aging fast and not enough younger heroes and heroines are choosing to become professors of

educational administration--where are they? According to current information America will experience a 40 percent dropout among principals and central office staff in the next 20 years--will the replacements be ready to lead schools through turbulent times which include a rising rate of student enrollment, largely minority and poor, and more meddling by legislators, school board members, and business leaders? There are fewer dollars to implement reform and public demands; and teachers are demanding to be empowered. The knowledge base to assist tomorrow's leaders with these staggering issues is out there somewhere--in the classroom, in the heads of teachers, students, and principals, in faculty committees carrying out a new program, in papers, books, and tapes. Educational Administration has a knowledge base and it is in several forms published by AASA, NASSP, NAESP, AERA, UCEA, NCPEA, other state, national and international professional and scholarly associations.

The scholarly action of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration brought both disquietude and hope based on the recommendations in Leaders [2]. The recent report of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration is a major result of that action. These developments have given the failures and struggles in administrator preparation national visibility for the first time. Unfortunately, neither Leaders or the Policy Board Report chose to lavish praise on efforts of professors who train administrators. **After all, when one comes to bury Caesar it is difficult to praise him.**

One must have the faith that the collective efforts in NCPEA and UCEA will raise the quality of certification and degree programs which will prepare the visionary, reflective, intelligent leaders to replace the tired, embattled ones looking to retirement. The new program and teaching ideas shared in conferences and implemented in classes must reflect the best in leadership training and reflective practice. These improvements can occur with or without a National Policy Board; the Policy Board may have run its course as a vital force for change unless it takes a long hard look at its image and direction.

The National Policy Board which consists of respected professors, representing UCEA and NCPEA, and quality leaders of professional organizations, should now back off and monitor the aftermath of their work. Their Report includes far reaching and controversial recommendations which were presented and discussed earlier in the week. The work of the Policy Board has heightened public awareness of the problems, the changes needed, and the resources required in improving administrator preparation programs. If the Board's influence is to be long lived it must now take on a supportive and not a controlling posture. The diversity of backgrounds and persuasions of the Board members should prove to be a positive factor in keeping a balanced, non-elitist image in the years ahead.

Some of the recommendations will be easier to achieve then others. While it may be possible to maintain a critical mass of at least five full-time faculty, requiring an Ed.D. as a prerequisite to national certification is not likely to happen.

State education departments, administrator organizations and universities have been moving to upgrade certification and Master's degree programs to better prepare the legions of new assistant principals and principals for America's school systems. The Master's degree will parallel the MBA and MPA degrees which will require more rigor, use of technology, field experience and personal growth plans. This professional Master's could become the basis for doctoral study if the student so chooses. The one full-time year of academic residency will continue to be fulfilled by the younger, less financially burdened student who will pursue either the Ph.D. or Ed.D. Perhaps modifications on the type and duration of the clinical residency for candidates with full-time administrative or teaching experience will be an adaptation of the program at Texas A&M to be presented later. There is much concern that a national professional standards board and a national certification examination are in the best interests of free thinking people who need a diversity of talent. Just as the AASA established guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators, the National Policy Board could establish a committee to monitor and report examples of quality preparation. As stated in the AASA Guidelines [6], "Professionalism depends on creativity and the capacity of individuals to capitalize on these unique strengths, since uniform standards applied may impair the flexibility that programs need to meet local or regional needs." The National Policy Board could do well to heed this statement.

The true test of the effect of the Policy Board will be if it is viewed as an idea center that reaches for the best knowledge

available to assist universities, administrator groups and state departments to help themselves. The simplistic "Flexner" model to investigate and recommend the demise of preparation programs based on untested rules and regulations will not succeed in today's age of litigation and bureaucracy. The Policy Board can be a beacon of light for individuals and departments needing assistance with program review and development. Numerous states and universities are presently undergoing significant changes by developing alternatives. The Policy Board has the potential to assist in these needed endeavors.

Knowledge and Faith at Texas A&M University

Beginning summer 1990 the Department of Educational Administration at Texas A&M will embark on a professional studies doctorate as an alternative to our current Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs. The ideas in the following prospectus are the result of two years of work by department faculty who read numerous papers and reports and spent many hours in committee meetings. These efforts have been bolstered by the Danforth Foundation which selected the department to become a member of the Cycle III Project. The program will consist of the following components:

Student Selection--Based on GRE scores, GPA, professional achievements, and recommendations from school superintendents, we have selected 15 students for the cohort. These 15 students are experienced teachers, beginning assistant principals, or principals who have potential for success in school leadership. Minorities and women make up a significant part of the cohort.

Cohort Faculty--Three faculty will direct the cohort. They will serve as advisers, teachers, and planners during each three-year cycle. An effort will be made to balance these additional responsibilities with ongoing teaching and advising in the regular Master's and doctoral programs. Efforts are under way to shift some of the administrative duties (i.e., admissions, conference planning, committee assignments) to other faculty or graduate assistants.

The other six full-time faculty will assist with the advising, and teach some or part of the required classes on campus and in the field.

Clinical Faculty--Two leading superintendents in the San Antonio, Texas, area have been selected to serve for three years as "Clinical Faculty." In this role they will plan and team teach extended weekend seminars in their school districts. They will also team teach in the intensive day-long 5-6 week summer seminars held on the A&M campus. These "clinical professors" will help represent the department at national and state professional meetings, assist with job placement of our graduates and network with state and national political, corporate and educational groups. They are also eligible to serve as members on students' doctoral committees. The compensation for clinical faculty includes a proportional salary and a travel allocation to defray the costs of conducting department business.

Program--The program will consist of approximately 72 hours beyond the Master's degree. Beginning the first summer each student will undergo a comprehensive performance assessment using Erlandson's

Management Profile (16) and take tests for communication, thinking, and problem solving. Each student will receive a professional growth plan which will be monitored over the three year program. The hours will be earned by taking six hours during each summer term. Six or seven hours can be taken during the fall and spring terms in the school setting. Also, one hour credit for two extended weekend seminars can be earned each fall and spring semester. The regular three-hour courses taught currently on campus and in San Antonio will be adapted to the cohort setting. The knowledge base will be similar but the teaching techniques will rely more on peer assisted and project learning. The weekend seminars will be field based, driven by district data analyses and reviews, and conversations with school and community leaders, teachers, students, and parents. Moreover, students will conduct research projects based on real school problems. The residency requirement will be met by the students attending classes for six weeks on campus for three successive summers, plus the 12 extended weekend sessions held in the district and other required activities in both settings. The cohort will attend meetings of the State Board of Education, state and national meetings of administrator groups and will present scholarly papers and become familiar with the political process in the legislature in Austin.

Internship--The cohort will begin an internship in the fall of 1990. Each student will be assigned a different supervising administrator/mentor each year which will assure a wide range of "clinical" experiences. The clinical internship will be carefully

planned and monitored to assure that it is a quality sequential program that provides a wide variety of real-world experiences.

Research skills--A twelve hour block of research courses is required, including two courses in statistics and two in measurement and program evaluation. The students will learn both naturalistic and rationalistic field research skills by applying them to projects during the three years. Their final projects or dissertation will be rigorous tests of their cumulative research skills and knowledge.

Financial Support--The resources from the program will come largely from our operational budget. External funds provided by the Danforth Foundation will pay for cooperative development of course strategies and materials, increase the growth opportunities for clinical and cohort faculty, and bring us together with other leading professors and programs in the current cycle and with those in Cycle II. These dialogues and idea exchanges will greatly enhance our bold venture into the professional studies model.

Why is the new model a better way to go?

This was they key question we had to answer before we began our three year planning process. Faculty opinions were mixed about a new program with a cohort of 15 selected doctoral students spending as much time in the field with clinical professors in an urban area as they do in a campus classroom. The professors wanted to know how they fitted into the new scheme and would they have to take on new and different roles? After two years of talking, sharing examples of related program materials and sub-committee reports, the program will begin in 1990. Will the new

way be better? Will we eventually replace our regular Ed.D. program with several cohorts in different urban locations? These questions will have more answers in three years. We believe that the new program will be superior to our current one in the following ways:

1. The student selection process will be more focused. Each student will be selected based on success as a teacher and administrator, potential for success in school administration as viewed by district administrators, grade point average, G.R.E., group interviews, and record of community and professional leadership positions. Since these students will need some release time from their teaching and administrative jobs, it is important to the student and to the program that the school district believes in his/her potential for success in school administration.

2. The residency experience will be much richer. The intense summer seminars and performance assessment profiles plus the extended weekend seminars will present a much more stimulating academic residency experience for future school leaders than our typical summer residency requirements. In some cases it will be superior to the Ph.D. residency requirements of 2 consecutive semesters. The close continuous interactions and the shared interests among the cohort, the clinical faculty, and the students themselves will present a much wider array of learning opportunities than does our current residency program. The campus and school district will truly become the cohort's marketplace for learning.

3. The course/knowledge base will be more sequential and related to the job of administrators. The courses, with some exceptions, will retain the same titles, but will be taught differently to balance the classic literature in theory, educational history and thought with the latest research on school effectiveness and the realities of schools and school leadership. Each student in the cohort will also conduct library and school based research related to his/her professional development plan. We believe the emphasis on individual professional development is a step in the right direction.

4. The students' world of professional awareness and contacts will be broadened. The cohort will attend state board meetings, local school board and city council sessions plus state and national professional conferences. Cohort faculty and clinical professors will introduce the students to prominent leaders in education and assure student participation as presenters and group leaders. These contacts are vital to professional development and opportunity for future school leaders.

We believe that this alternative program will respond to most of the concerns or recommendations in the Policy Board Report and will create a data base to monitor the long term effects of the program on administrator performance. Each student's performance will be cataloged during the three years of the program and we will continue to follow his/her performance for several years.

Perhaps, some portions of our professional studies doctorate will be useful to you in the Master's and specialist's programs. The sharing and cross fertilization/interchange of ideas has

always been an important thrust of NCPEA. We will need your advice and positive thoughts in this venture.

Conclusion

Schiller's "blows of heavy hammers" can be avoided if needed improvements are made in preparation programs. All of the Dorothies, tin men, lions, and scarecrows will need more than hope, hearts, courage and brains to overcome flying monkeys and witches that threaten American education. Professors of educational administration must be better observers, researchers, and teachers than we have ever been. Unless preparation programs become as respected as any other professional discipline, the hammer blows will intensify and the wizards (i.e., deans, vice presidents and presidents), may decide that programs and professors can be replaced. The students selected for graduate study must be bright and eager; the programs must be designed to draw on the best knowledge base. NCPEA and UCEA must become one in spirit to provide professional growth opportunities and to provide the best models and processes to guide preparation programs. Until these two professional organizations move beyond the empty rhetoric of togetherness, the National Policy Board will remain a force for quality assurance in educational administration.

Just as Michelangelo envisioned an object of beauty trapped in a block of stone, we too can envision the kinds of school leaders we need and the kinds of programs to produce them. Once we have the vision and the resolve to improve, we can begin the laborious and noble task of creating the future of educational administration. We need not look "somewhere over the rainbow" to

find our dreams of excellence. We have the knowledge, but where is the faith?

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